Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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OUR WORK.

Our Natural History Club.—To the Students in the H. of E.N.C., by M. L. Hodgson.—The wonderful beauty of the present spring gives us all plenty to do, and a great many things to look for. The mountain flowers and ferns are great treasures, and are so new to many of you that a cry of "edelweiss" arose at the first sight of the mountain cudweed (*antennaria dioica*), which was not a bad illustration of the *Association of Ideas*. We have a bewildering wealth of things to occupy our attentions now, in contrast to what we found only a few short weeks ago, when our best work was to observe and copy bare outlines of twigs and general contours of leafless trees.

Now there are the trees to be observed and learnt over again. Someone said the other day "I know all the trees without their leaves, but now they are out, there are a great many I don't recognise at all." This must be remedied, and don't neglect the leaves of the trees in order to go after the, to you, more attractive flowers; but as you find time and opportunity, either here or when you are away in the summer, paint as clearly and carefully as possible a leaf of each tree, and place it in your book by the side of the twig you did of same tree in February or March.

Flowering plants are almost too numerous to mention. All the Buttercups are inviting your careful attention. You all have some idea, from the paper I read to you last week, of the distinctions to be looked for in three of our common buttercups. I advise you to search out these and see how they differ, for yourselves. They are not hard to find, and afford a pleasant introduction to their Order. You already know so many plants by sight that it scarcely seems necessary to say much about them, but what I am sure you would find a delightful plan, would be to paint a careful portrait of at least one characteristic plant in each of our chief Orders, and by the side of it write out and learn the features of the Order. If whilst painting you bear in mind what Order it is you are doing, and try to remember other plants you may have seen belonging to it, you will always more easily fit a plant into its place at first sight than you perhaps think possible. Be very careful in the flower you choose to represent an Order; as, for instance, you would not do well to choose Herb Paris as a good example to illustrate the Liliaceæ, interesting as it is from its quaint form and strange spidery looking blossom.

Mr. Baker, of Kew, tells us that there are just 50 ferns, and nearly 850 flowering plants in the Lake District. This is comfort to me at least, as I took up a small book on ferns the other day, and found that a fern which I had always considered a single-minded individual had only 77 varieties, you may be sure that I closed the book in despair, and gave up the idea of telling you to look out for the ferns. I did think I knew a little about them before this, but concluded it was my ignorance that thought so, and that therefore I had better see how little I knew before I mentioned them to you. But "just 50 ferns" sounds encouraging, and we may hope to find at least a few of them, only bear in mind that it is a monstrous thing to strip a lovely bank of Oak, Beech or Parsley ferns just for the pleasure of picking them, and I certainly hope to find that you all use self restraint in taking sparingly of what gives pleasure to everybody.

The House of Education.—Students who desire to enter the House of Education in September should apply at once. The demand for our Governesses continues to be very great, and we have most happy accounts of those already at work. Let us say definitely that we *do not train Lady Nurses*, but Governesses only, *primary* Governesses for beginners, and *secondary* Governesses for advanced pupils. It has been necessary to give up the title "Tante," because it was supposed to mean some kind of Nurse or Mother's Help. Lady Nurses are trained at the Norland Institute, 9, Norland Place, Holland Park Gardens, W.

The Parents' Review School.—The Easter examination shows delightfully satisfactory results. In the whole school probably not more than three pupils have sent in unsatisfactory work. Bible History, English History, Greek History, and Natural History call for special commendation Arithmetic is still rather a weak subject on the whole. We must again urge some of "our" Parents to secure teaching in this subject from an elementary Teacher. Highly educated Governesses, able to teach children well in other subjects, are often deficient in this. Will Parents kindly send stamps for the return of papers, and will *all* our correspondents be good enough to send stamped and addressed envelopes for reply?

Mothers' Education Course.—The second examination takes place this month.

Fésole Club, June, 1893.—The plans for this month have been partly upset by the fact that several of the members are spending it in town. The club is intended for country people who have no other convenient opportunities and encouragements in their drawing; and the intention was to have sent our artists out along the lanes in search of their subjects. But we are glad to have the townspeople too; and if they will not mind taking a sketch book or block into the park to draw DUCKS, both in the water and out of the water, they will find a subject full of variety and interest. Country members who do not happen to live near Ducks may draw Fowls. It should be remembered that the object of these studies is not to make pictures: some of the Sheep-sketches for April, for example, are too elaborate as compositions. It is quite right to put in backgrounds, if you colour at all; but, while the background should be just what comes in nature behind the figure, it is not wise to work it out into a complete landscape, unless you have really been able to draw your figure rightly and to finish it solidly. The Sheep are, however, a very pretty flock, and highly creditable to beginners in animal-painting. Another cause of congratulation is that the missing packet for November has come to light, after unexplained detention for a good deal over three months by relatives of one of the members. It is hoped that all members will see that the packet is properly forwarded; they can have little idea what anxiety and trouble may be occasioned by trifling carelessness. Word should always be left, on going away from home, with some responsible person to send the Fésole parcel on; and in forwarding, it would be well to write "Fésole Club" on the outside of the cover, above or below the address. Drawings should be sent by the end of the month to W. G. Collingwood, Coniston, R.S.O., Lancashire.